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The World on Time

PM's visit to US
Govt refutes BNP's allegations

The government has refuted the allegations made by BNP regarding the Prime Minister's visit to the United States, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister's comment on the Prime Minister's visit is not only baseless and untrue, but also disgraceful and utterly devoid of courtesy, said an official handout.

It said the PM's visit to the United States is not sponsored by the government exchequer and this tour does not violate any rules of the Constitution.

The Prime Minister herself takes every important official decisions and actions are being taken following her directives.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister are communicating every happenings to the head of the government.

The handout also said the allegations of irresponsibilities and carelessness of the Prime Minister about people's sufferings are also baseless.

Every day the Prime Minister is enquiring about relief and rehabilitation activities in the flood-hit areas from the United States, it added.

Khulna BCL
leader killed

KHULNA, July 24: The body of a pro-Awami League Chakra League leader was recovered from a house in the city today, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police searched an underconstruction three-storey building of Alo Super Market at Khan A Sabur Road and found the body of Bikash Saha, 22, hanging from the ceiling.

Police suspected Bikash, son of one Dular Chandra Saha of Beni Babu Road, might have been beaten to death.

Two killed in
road accident

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, July 24: Two persons were killed in a road accident on the Narayanganj-Demra road this morning.

One of the victims was identified as Noor Mohammad, 55 while the identity of the other aged about 12, could not be known.

Liftman dies

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authorities, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body from the lift's passage.

Police said Omar Ali was operating the lift by generator as electricity supply was snapped at about 5 pm on Wednesday. But they suspected that he was trapped when the generator was stopped at about 7 pm.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

BNP demos

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decision.

It decided to declare countrywide street agitation, if necessary, in support of the demands.

The meeting alleged the ruling party, since assumption of power, continued killing, attack, filing of false case, arrest and character assassination to destroy BNP under a blueprint.

Meanwhile, an emergency joint meeting of Dhaka city BNP and its different front organisations will be held tomorrow at 5 pm at the party central office.

City BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP has requested all the city unit members, presidents and secretaries of front organisations, and BNP-supported commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation to attend the meeting, said a press release yesterday.

BTV

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them of "transparency, accountability and sincerity".

The meeting took place at the office of the National Broadcasting Authority in the afternoon.

A BTV source told The Daily Star later at night that the DG informed the BNP delegates that the planned programme of the Leader of the Opposition would be broadcast under arrangements similar to those done for the Prime Minister's programme earlier. In reply, the BNP representatives said they needed further discussions in the party on the matter.

However, the sources said, minor changes in planning the Opposition leader's programme could be made through "mutual understanding". BTV sources said, hinting at further discussions on the issue.

None of the BNP delegates was available for comment.

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Neela Chowdhury, mother of film star Salman Shah, addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

— Star photo

Salman's father appeals
to turn UD case
into murder case

By Court Correspondent

Kamruddin Ahmed Chowdhury, father of the late film star Salman Shah, yesterday filed a petition before the third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, for turning his son's unnatural death (UD) case into a case of murder.

He also prayed for transferring the case to the CID for proper investigation.

The UD case was lodged with Ramna police station after the death of his son on October 6, 1996.

In his petition Kamruddin Ahmed Chowdhury said one of his sons had given a confession statement under Section 164 of CrPC and named ten people as being involved in the alleged murder of his son at his Eskaton apartment.

The persons named by Rizvi are: Samira Shah, widow of Salman Shah, Aziz Mohammad Bhai, Latifa Huq Luchi, actor Don, David, Javed, Farook, Ruby, Abdus Sattar and Saju.

UNB adds: At a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, Neela Chowdhury

mother of Salman narrating the arrest episode of Rizvi, claimed that he had been sent to her house by Salman's killers in a bid to kidnap her younger son, Biltu.

She also complained that despite their request for a CID investigation into the death of Salman, it had been sent to the DB for the second time.

Following our request, she said, the case had been sent to CID from DB, but it was again sent to DB for unknown reasons. "We don't know who is investigating it now."

Salman entered the Bangla filmdom along with actress Mousumi in 1989 through 'Keyamat Theke Keyamat', a remake from Hindi, and the duo became very popular in no time.

The film star reportedly committed suicide at his Eskaton residence on September 6, 1996. His post-mortem and various reports suggested that he had committed suicide.

But, his family claimed from the very beginning that he had been killed.

Rohingyas demonstrate

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Star yesterday.

Earlier on Sunday, UNHCR apprised a letter to the government about the allegation of "forcible repatriation".

The Amnesty International, in a press release on Wednesday, said "Refugees have been forcibly returned to Myanmar, where forced labour and portering continue at a high level".

The government, however, refuted the allegation of forced repatriation.

Talking to The Daily Star State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said that refugees were not being repatriated by force. The Myanmar authorities had earlier issued 'clearance' for some 7,000 refugees and agreed to take back their nationals by August 15.

UNHCR officials from Dhaka went to Cox's Bazar yesterday morning to visit the camps and have talks with government officials there on the latest developments.

When contacted over telephone yesterday evening, a UNHCR official in Cox's Bazar told The Daily Star that they were trying to meet Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner AQM Qamrul Huda but he was busy because of the trouble in the camps.

He, however, confirmed it that no force was being applied to make the refugees agree to be repatriated. But he added that 67 Rohingya children were repatriated on Sunday and Tuesday while their mothers remained in the camps till last night.

Over 100 anti-repatriation refugees are still staging a sit-in protest outside the Kutupalong camp, the UNHCR official said at nine last night.

He also confirmed that officials from the US and British mission in Dhaka visited Cox's Bazar yesterday to know the latest situation in the camps.

Stalemate at
IU continues

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 24: the stalemate at the Islamic University continues. The BCL activists who locked up the main gate of the university after ransacking the office of the Vice-Chancellor on June 26, are continuing their agitation in support of their demand for removal of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Enamul Huq. The Teachers Association of the University has also expressed its support to BCL.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday arrested an alleged heroin smuggler Saiful Islam alias Ripon from Asad Gate area under Mohammadpur police station in the city, reports BSS.

Police said Ripon is accused in at least 20 criminal cases with Ramna, Motijheel and Kotwali police stations. Ripon, who allegedly involved in criminal activities in Fulbaria, Gulshtan and Kaptan Bazar areas for a long time, is said to be a member of an organised gang of drug traffickers.

Turning to the role of civil society movement, Shahabuddin said it aims at creating a society in which its members can live in peace, honour and dignity free from fear of any kind.

"It cooperates with the state functionaries for promoting democracy in its truest term — a democracy which presupposes free and fair elections and guarantees effective participation of the people in the decision-making process at all levels of administration."

He also said that the civil society movements "also strive

The Daily Star
Court rejects Laloo's
bail prayer

PATNA, July 24: A court refused today to grant protection from arrest to a leader of India's ruling coalition who is a suspect in a massive corruption case, reports AP.

The ruling could clear the way for the jailing of Laloo Prasad Yadav, the chief minister of the state of Bihar and a powerful personality in Prime Minister I K Gujral's coalition, the United Front.

Yadav said he will now appeal to the Supreme Court in New Delhi, United News of India news agency reported. Yadav said he is talking to his lawyers, who will probably file the appeal tomorrow.

News of the decision by the Bihar High Court in Patna sent the Bombay stock market — India's largest bourse — plunging by one per cent in 25 minutes, a sign that investors viewed it as further destabilising the shaky 3-month-old government.

Yadav is being investigated in the alleged swindle of tens of millions of dollars from the state treasury earmarked to buy livestock feed. He has denied wrongdoing.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which is prosecuting the case, had argued to the court that it wanted Yadav's arrest so that he could not tamper with the evidence.

Yadav had filed a separate plea in the High Court in Patna, capital of Bihar, saying he should be let off on bail if police arrest him. The judge threw out his plea.

In his order, Judge DS Dhalwai said he is convinced that excess money was withdrawn from state funds, which could not have been possible without a conspiracy, Press Trust of India news agency reported. He said if the allegations were true, it would be an offense against the nation. PTI reported.

In New Delhi, Gujral and his

ministers discussed the ruling and favoured Yadav's resignation, PTI reported quoting unnamed sources as saying.

Gujral has repeatedly urged Yadav to quit as chief minister of Bihar, but many parties in his coalition have rejected that suggestion.

Probe body formed:
Steps taken to
face emergency
power crisis

A six-member committee has been constituted to find out the cause of Wednesday's power grid failure that plunged most parts of the country into darkness for hours, reports UNB.

The committee was formed in a high-level meeting of the Energy Ministry yesterday. Secretary Dr Toufig-e-Elahi Chowdhury was in the chair, said a press release.

Headed by PDB Member (Distribution) Rafiqul Islam as convenor, the committee has been asked to submit its report to the authority within seven days.

The meeting also took a number of decisions to avert recurrence of such incident.

It decided to formulate a code of operating standard procedures for both PDB and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) for tackling emergency power crisis.

An information centre has been opened at Ulan Grid Substation to feed information on power supply situation to the consumers and news media during emergency. Its telephone numbers are 410354, 405304 and 9333940.

In New Delhi, Gujral and his

Magurjhara fire

From page 1

aster area again today but was refused entry for the second time.

"It's very dangerous to go in there and there is nothing much to see," said a fire fighting expert.

Occidental has started selecting a new site for drilling a relief well. A helipad is being set up in Moulvibazar for faster communication.

At the site, eight bulldozers and two heavy trucks were kept standby.

Meanwhile, the drilling rig and other equipment brought from Thailand and Singapore are being transported to Moulvibazar for relief operation in the exploded Magurjhara gaswell, according to UNB.

The Occidental will start drilling operation for a relief well with the help of the rig at the gasfield within a few days, company officials informed the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in a meeting yesterday.

The district administration has increased security measures at Srimangal railway station following complaints that inter-district passengers are being cheated by unscrupulous people there. Srimangal is the transit point between Sylhet and rest of the country.

Meanwhile, the work for raising barbed wire fencing around the gas well area continued. A team of The Daily Star attempted to visit the dis-

tribution of gas-bubbles was now limited within half km-long and quarter km-wide area centering the well. The inflammable bubbles were found mainly in low-lying areas.

Such popping gas could not cause a big fire like that of last month, they said.

The central bank has earlier given approval to the applica-

tions of 16 firms and compa-

nies. The latest endorsement

raised the total number of money changers in the country to 55.

The region-wise distribution of the licences is as follows:

Dhaka-40, Chittagong-3, Khulna-3, Sylhet-1, Benapole-5, Rajshahi-1, Sylhet-1 and Bogra-1.

Earlier, licences were given to the firms from Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet.

The announcement said more such applications received from different parts of the country are under consider-

ation of the bank.

The firms who were given li-

cences are Delta Bureau of

Change Ltd., NZ Money Ex-

change, Bogra Money Changer, Global Money Changer, MS Money Changer, Jonopriya Money Ex-

change Service, Capital Money

Changer, Alam Money Changer,

Sub Money Exchange Ltd., Wall

Street Money Exchange, City

Money Exchange Ltd., Ikrar

Money Exchange Agency, Alim

Money Exchange, Metro Money

Changer, Secured Money Ex-

change, Apollo Money Chang-

ing Agency, Jahangir Money

Exchanger, The City Exchange

House, K&K Exchange Interna-

tional, Unique Money Ex-